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THE
PIPER of PEEBLES,
A TALE.

By the LAMB-LEADER. K

A tale of the times that are past—
The deeds of the days that are gone;
Fae goblins abroad on the blast,
At midnight made horrible mane!
Fae knowledge in Cloisters confin'd,
Was kept by the clerical crew;
The people priest-ridden an' blind,
Believ'd sic absurdities true.

✓ DUNDEE,
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PREFACE.

THE subsequent Essay is a real original: It is not the most distant imitation of any thing I have ever seen. However ludicrously the antiquated manners of an ancient ignorant age are depicted in the introduction, many yet living can authenticate the most romantic part of the picture. I myself have seen some, heard all, and much more than is there observed of former fashions.

The Fable is painted as fancy described, and carried on, and concluded as nature dictated. We disclaim all pretensions to poetical craft; and versify by random rather than rule. Sense, harmony, and humour, we think are three good ingredients in poetical composition; but every thing that assumes the name of song, grovelling where it should glow, and flat where it should flame, is dull and disgusting. If the following is chargeable with these defects, it was not designed.—The ablest may err, and the best may blunder.—Involuntary oversights claim excuse. We never expected to please every body. Every production, tho' well wrote, cannot stand the test and scrutiny of carping critics, more than the absurd opinions, and impious assertions of the preternatural exploits of witches, ghosts and faries, can bear philosophical investigation. —It would not become me to judge of the merits or defects of the Piper; let him speak for himself. There is not a borrowed line in the whole.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE
PIPER of PEEBLES,
A T A L E.

FAN common fouk had scrimper skill,
An' Gentles scarce had wealth at will;
Twa hunder year, or mair sin' syne—
Fan fashions werna near sae fine.
Fan hodden-grey, undy'd or drest,
Was sonfy weeds to busk the best
That yokit plows, an' paid the Lairds
Sae mony marks, for fine corn yards.—
Fan barefoot horse, like pedlars packs,
Boot bear the middens on their backs,
To muck the riggs in ilka field,
In the barfeed, e'er they were till'd :
An' carry fire to rich an' poor,
Baith peats an' truffs, frae moss an' muir ;
An' cadge the craps, fan cuttit down
In hairsd, hame o'er unto the Town :
Fan Coops an' Carts were unco rare,
An' Creels, an' Corrocks boot to sair.—
Fan knockit bear made Sunday's kail,
An' fouk in Pots brew'd Braithel Ale.

Fan nane but meadow girs was mawn,
 An' nane but hamit linjet fawn,—
 Fan lint was beaten wi' the mell,
 An' ilkane fungled to themsell.
 Fan wives wi' rocks an' spindles span,
 An' brawest lasses us'd nae lawn.—
 Fan stiffen wafna fought, nor blue
 To mutches—Fan the farkes were few,
 An' very stark, but no' that fast,
 An' seenil worn wi' washing aft :
 Some had but ane, an' some had twa,
 An' mony mae had nane ava.
 Fan lasses, wi' their rocks set out
 To ane anither night about——
 Wad gane a mile o' ground an' mair,
 Sometimes no' very free o' fear,
 To hear auld stories ilka night
 In winter, fan there was moonlight.
 Upo' their spindles, near the tap,
 They biggit ay a bulgy knap
 O' thread, cross-brath'd, firm to defend
 The rest frae reav'ling o'er the end.
 Sometimes they strave, an' them that wan,
 Ay thought they first deserv'd a man.
 To save their plaiden coats, some had
 Upo' the hench a bonnet braid
 Of an auld wecht, or kairding skin,
 To rub an' gar the spindle rin
 Down to the ground wi' twirling speed,
 An' twine upo' the floor the thread;
 An' some their right-side cleas row'd up,
 An' snoov'd upo' the nakit hip.—

Lang

Lang ainna nights they counted half
 Done, fan they coost their whorles aff.
 They row'd their yarn upon hand reels,
 Afore the use o' spinning wheels;—
 Tell'd ilka cut that they ty'd up,
 By double-downcomes, jig, an' whup,
 An' scores, an' so forth, as exact
 As reels can count, that's made to chack.
 Fan fouk grey-hair'd, play'd birly-bracks,
 Wi' youngsters round about the stacks,
 Mixt, men, wives, lads an' lasses too,
 An' birds, that hadna hose, nor shoe.
 Fan cummers fled, an' hurl'd as weel
 On ice, as ony vady chiel.—
 Fan very few cud write, or read,
 An' commons took on trust their creed,
 An' sought nae realons, *why*, nor *what*
 They sud believe—do this or that.
 An' mony wont-to-be's, nae doubt,
 An' customs we ken nought about
 Were then in vogue, that's now forgotten,
 An' them that us'd them lang syne rotten.
 A time's for a' thing we can name;
 An' time too for the rippling kame;—
 A time to flourish, time to fail,
 Sae to the tenor of our tale.
 About thae times, besouth Kinghorn,
 A country Laird became forlorn
 Wi' bags o' debt—a birden fair
 For ony honest mind to bear.
 If in his youth he had been rash,
 An' prodigally spent his cash;

Or

Or if misfortunes unforeseen,
 Had multiply'd against him been,
 We dinna ken——It matters not,
 Death accidental—drown'd, or shot.——
 But daily dogg'd, an' dunn'd, an' deav'd,
 Wi' creditors, that clam'ring crav'd,
 He tint the heart, an' cudna eat
 Wi' melancholy, half his meat.
 He dream'd of gloomy prisons grim,
 An' dreary dungeons dark an' dim,
 With iron doors, padlocks, an' bars,
 (As stark as mith out-wear the stars,)
 Where he was trail'd to lie on strae;
 An' starting waken'd—sobbing wae!
 The large estate that his forebeers
 Possess'd, for some three hunder years,
 Free as the water i' the well,
 He saw, he shortly boot to sell;
 With all his chattles, goods, an' gear,—
 An' be, alas! a Laird nae mair.
 His friends forlook him, fan they saw
 His wealth on wings had flown awa';
 An' want, that formidable fae,
 Gat grips, an' wadna let him gae.
 Sad sorrow ay maun light on some;
 An' wha can flee frae ills to come?
 Crush'd down with agonizing care,
 His mind was brooding black despair:
 But blest Religion bade him try
 To fix his heart on things on high;
 That wad endure, when earth and sea,
 An' sun and moon sud cease to be.

Then

Then with submission he began
To bear his troubles like a man.

Ae glowmin, fan the sun was set,
An' fields wi' falling dew some wet;
In's avenues, as at the air,
Where aft he gade, fan it was fair,
To shed his sorrows, out o' sight,
Upo' the wind—a waefu' wight;—
A man came riding, mighty bra',
Upon a beast, as black's a crow;
Clear filler bells in bunches hang
At his horse mane, an' sweetly rang:
An' yet for a' his princely pride,
He had nae servant for a guide.
With ceremony most discreet,
He paid his compliments complete;
Speer'd fou he was, an' said that he
On purpose came exprefs to see,
An' on condition, help him too,
In any thing that he cud do.
The poor insolvent Laird seem'd shy——
The stranger smiling answer'd, ' Why?
“ The troubles that distract your mind
“ Are printed in your face, I find?
“ Out with your wants---nor hod affraid,
“ Your straits, frae ane that offers aid;
“ I'll prove your friend, fan far awa',
“ The best on earth ye ever saw.——
“ I understand, wi' debt ye're drown'd;
“ An' I hae hail ten thousand pound,
“ That nane alive kens ought about,
“ An' I intend to lay it out.——

“ Yes,

" Ye's get it on your fingle bond,
 " As I frae Scotland maun abscond
 " To France, or in a woody swing
 " For lies a neighbour tauld the king——
 " An' said I meant to tak' his life,
 " To lat a gallant get his wife.
 " Afore forefaulted by the law,
 " Frae court the streen, I came awa',
 " Bespake a ship, an' canna stay
 " At hame, aboon anither day.——
 " To-morrow night, if ye incline
 " I'll bring the bag, an' bond to sign,
 " At twal o'clock——Be sure let nane
 " Be i' the room, but you your lane.
 " Nae witnesses shall sign the deed;
 " Or see you write, or hear me read.
 " Fan we get matters settled, then
 " I'll tell you a' my story plain;
 " An' ere the sun be up, I'll be
 " Frae a' their fingers, on the sea;
 " An' if I never come again,
 " The filler, Sir, is a' your ain:
 " Wha wadna write their name wi' blude,
 " For sic a lusty list, an' gude?
 The Laird reply'd---" I maun confess,
 " I hinna words that can express
 " My obligations---Hech!---indeed
 " Of money I hae muckle need.
 " Pray, Sir, What is your name?---are ye
 " By blude relation sib to me?"
 The stranger said, " Ye needna' speer
 " Particulars, at present here;

" Nienst

“ Nienst fan we meet, I’se lat you see

“ I’m near as fib as fib can be,

“ Mean time, I canna stay, Adieu,”

An’ at the gallop aff he flew.

The Laird took to the house, an’ read
A chapter, ere he gade to bed,

In pray’r implor’d Messiah’s peace

To guide him in the ways of grace.

The morn at late, that dreary hour,

Fan spectres grim begin their tour,

An’ stalk in frightfu’ forms abroad,

Performing feats amazing odd!

That hour foul hags broomsticks bestride,

An’ thro’ the air exulting ride,

To their nocturnal revels rude,

An’ actions damn’d, debauch’d, an’ lewd

With Satan’s self, their hellish head!

An’ cast their cantraips o’er the dead,

Till coffins frae the graves arise!

An’ corpse frae coffins in surprise!

With gogling een, an’ wither’d hands,

Start up at their obscene commands!

In winding sheets, lang lodg’d in dust;

If tales be true the simple trust.

That hour fan Ferries in a ring

Trip round the green, an’ dance an’ sing,

Before to Banquet they retreat,

To some waste house, to sup in state;

Frae golden goblets drink the wine,

An’ feast on delicacies fine.

That hour, fan ghaists, on burial stanes,

Play o’er the knows wi’ dead fouks banes;

Or

Or strole with fullen strides alang,
 Where they hae gi'en, or gotten wrang;
 An' grane wi' grief—as some pretend,
 Whare they'll be conjur'd afterhend.
 That hour, the dullest in the night,
 The Laird, alane, with candle-light,
 In expectation waited keen,
 The issue of his tryft the streen.

The stranger at the hour exact,
 Brought up the stair upo' his back,
 As muckle goud, an' rather mair,
 Than wad out-weigh twal pecks o' bear.
 Upon a table large an' stout,
 He toom'd the yellow metal out,
 An' said he hadna' time to bide
 Till it was counted—he boot ride
 Within an hour---The Laird might trust,
 The sum was there, exact an' just.
 He then drew out the bond an' read,
 An' i' the tail, it plainly said,
 That after fifteen years, in fine,
 The Laird sud be his servant syne,
 Frae that aback, an' wi' his blude
 Subscribe to mak' the bargain gude.
 As upright fouk abhor mischief—
 As honest men despise a thief—
 As dogs detest a grunting sow,
 So laigh the Laird disdain'd to bow!
 The article, forever mair,
 Of servitude, displeas'd him fair.
 To write wi' blude, he wadna' fash,
 An' yet he fain wad keep the cash.

He

He bang'd his arms about it round,
 An' sternly on the stranger frown'd,
 Exclaim'd, " Thou subtle source of sin,
 " The Earth's the LORD's, and all therein,
 " Hence, Satan! to your black abode,
 " In name of my Almighty God!"
 Fierce as the light'ning darts on high,
 Rude as the thunder rends the sky;
 As fierce, and with as rude a roar,
 The Devil made himself a door——
 Thro' the house head, a flame he flew
 Of stinking brimstane—burning blue!
 Of force infernal---mighty proof——
 He seem'd to carry aff the roof!——
 The Laird look'd up in sad surprise,
 An' thought he saw the fable skies.
 The candle trembled, as with fright,
 An' glimmer'd dim, a dowy light——
 The house from top to bottom shook,
 An' as a wanrest wagg'd the crook,——
 The tott'ring chairs on ither clink,——
 The looms, they rattled i' the bink——
 The cock was waken'd—clapt an' crew
 An hour o'er soon, fan Satan flew:
 The shaking syne began to cease,
 An' in a minute a' was peace;
 Again the candle burnt fu' bright;
 The house was haill, an' a' thing right.
 He lockt the door, laid up the goud,
 An' blest the Being that bestow'd
 Upon him pow'r to countermine,
 An' baffle Satan's black design.
 He paid his debt ere ever lang,
 An' thrive as fast as he gade wrang;

His friends came flocking back wi' speed,
 Wad help him fan he hadna need :
 So cowards that flee the hostile plain,
 When foes retreat, can fight the slain.
 Sedate, he circumspectly spent
 His time at hame, in calm content,
 A votery of virtue white,
 An' in devotion took delight,——
 Belov'd by young, an' auld, an' a'
 That kend him, either gryte or sma'.
 Saxteen year after, he was at
 A braithel, where the broth was fat ;
 In ancient times a taiken sure,
 The Bridegroom was na' reckon'd poor.
 A vast o' fouk a' round about
 Came to the feast, they din'd therout.
 Twa pair o' Pipers playing gade,
 About the table, as they fed :
 Mirth spread her mantle o'er them a',
 But sorrow was na' far awa'.

While suppin' at the sav'ry skink,
 An' takin' whiles a waught o' drink,
 A gentleman in decent drefs,
 Came riding up, as on express,
 An' order'd an' o' them that fairs
 The company, to tell the Laird
 To speak a word---he came in haste ;
 The Gentleman upo' the beast
 Held down his head, to hark, or speer
 Some secrets, ithers sudna hear.
 As seemingly, they thus confort
 A pistol loot a loud report,
 An' at the Laird's feet, frae his horse
 The stranger fell a blacken'd corse,

The fouk at table start---an' saw
 Him from the saddle flound'ring fa'.
 The steed in fury took the flight,
 An' soon ran backward out o' sight,
 Confus'd frae dinner fast they ran,
 To see the murder'd gentleman,
 As on the ground he lifeless lay,
 Afore the Laird that luckless day,---
 The short poutch-pistol that had shot
 Him dead, out-by a bit they got.
 A while in silence scowl'd the crowd,
 An' syne a kebbby-lebby loud
 Gat up, an' twenty at a time
 Gae their opinions of the crime.
 Some curst, an' cry'd, be sure to guard,
 An' ither some to grip the Laird;
 An' some said let him rin awa',
 An' some said that's against the law;
 For malefactors, man or wife,
 An' murderers sud los the life.
 The Laird stood staring, till his een
 Thought ev'ry thing was blue an' green,
 As criminal they seiz'd him soon,
 An' took him aff that afternoon,
 Into Auld Reekie, corps an' a',
 An' gae them up unto the law,
 Produc'd the Pistol did the deed,
 An' proof to swear, fan there was need.
 The Laird was fairly in a fang,
 An' naething for him now, but hang.
 He's prision'd, an' examin'd too,
 But a' that they cud say or do,
 He still deny'd the guilt, an' said,
 " To suffer death, I'm no' affraid;

" But of the murder I am free,
 " An' innocent, as ane can be.
 " If he be shot, he shot himsel;
 " Or it was me he meant to fell.
 " Gar Surgeons searh the body round,
 " If they can find the fatal wound;
 " Tho' he be dead, there hafna' been
 " Nae blude, that ony body's seen.
 " An' dinna bury him afore
 " Some body ken him, I implore,---
 " His friends will seek him soon, nae doubt;
 " The horse gawn hame will set them out;
 " Fan they come here, perhaps ye'll find
 " What drift wi' me he had design'd."
 The Court conceiv'd thae cautions right,
 An' gaird inspect the corpse that night.
 Some Doctors came to seek the hole,
 That thro' his body sent the soul;
 But fan they loos'd his breast, they swore
 He had been dead ten days afore---
 They cudna touch him for a stink,
 An' kendna' what to say or think.
 With odours, an' the like, belyve,
 They drown'd the dreadfu' smelling dyve,
 Syne gribbled him, but gat nae wound,
 His hyde they said, was heal an' sound.
 The Doctors said he cudna be
 A Gentleman, of nae degree;
 His hands were thick, an' hard---his skin,
 Fan he was living, had been din:
 An' tho' his coat, an' vest were bra',
 His fark an' gravat was na' sma'.
 A notice was sent thro' the town,
 To a' the strangers up an' down,

To come an' see him---mony ran,
 But nane kend ought about the man.
 For near an' ook, day after day,
 Perfum'd, in public view he lay,
 An' country fouk to see him sent,
 But nane o' a' the crowds that went
 Kend ought about him, name, or place,
 Nor ever living, saw his face.
 The Town o' him was weary'd fair,
 An' wadna' keep him muckle mair;
 As nae relations came to look
 Or speer about him a' the ook---
 That day, there had come in a crew
 Of Cairds, wha drank till they were fou,
 An' on the street, the strolling gang
 Fell out, an' faught, an' grat, an' sang.
 Amo' the rest, a muckle wife,
 To save her skin, forfook the strife,
 Observ'd the dead man---gade to see,
 We twa three mae, what he might be.
 But fan his visage she survey'd---
 " Preserve's!" in sad surprise she pray'd!
 " That's the Piper of Peebles! Wha
 " Has buskit him, fan dead sae brae?
 " I saw him yerdit, I can swear---
 " Frae his lang hame fou came he there?
 " The living may repent wi' speed,
 " Fan fouk are flitting frae the dead!"
 She blest herself, an' brought the crew,
 To prove her testimony true.
 They lookt his face, an' syne his hands,
 Ane felt his fark, it hadna bands;
 An' positively a' protest,
 It was the Piper, better drest,

Than fan he liv'd, for he was poor,
 An' loo'd a' drink, an' whiles a wh--re.
 The Caird's were brought before the court,
 An' Magistrates, to mak' report
 Of the defunct, a fortnight back,
 As far as they cud prove for fact.
 Just this day fourtnight, they reply'd,
 In's bed at hame, the Piper dy'd;
 Nienst afternoon he was inter'd
 Amang poor fouk in the Kirk-yard.

" We saw him buried---but we have
 " Nae notion how he's left the grave."

A carl, as crooked as a creel,
 Said, " twenty year I kend him weel,
 " In Peebles Piper---pawkie lown,
 " He has a clunker on his crown,
 " Like half an erracks egg---an' youn
 " Undoubtedly is Duncan Drone."

Anither wife too made remark,
 She sauld his wife the burial fark;
 She kend it brawly by the sleeve,
 An' on the breast, they might believe,
 There was a cross of oowen thread,
 Of twa ply twisted, blue an' red.
 Thae marks mith fair to prove the man,
 Tho' fouk the cause fud never scan---
 Fooosh him the living there to fleg;
 An' bring the town to cost an' plague.
 The Doctors there, declar'd they saw
 The clunker, an' the cross an' a.

They loot them see the pistol syne——

A carl exclaim'd, " That pistol's mine;
 " Just this day-aught-days, thro' the night,
 " I watna fou it took the flight,

" I thought my wife had stown't in short,

" An' pay'd her on suspicion for't.

" I had new cramn'd it near the mou ;

" It's no' been fir'd, I find it fu',

" Weel calfin'd wi' a clout o' green,

" As at this minute may be seen."

Then drew the shot, to their surprise---

" Lat wark bear witness---there he cries

" Is documents ye needna doubt,

" Baith find an' see the forrage clout."

That made them marvel maist as fair,

As how the dead man had come there.

The vouchers of the vagrant crew,

Tho' vastly strange prov'd very true ;

Clear'd up the main point seem'd so dark,

Tho' mystery still involv'd the mark.

The Court were a' convinc'd in mind,

The prisoner was wrang confin'd ;--

The Doctors with the Cairds agree,

That of the murder he was free :

An' from the prison, an' the cause,

He was assullied with applause.

The Laird saw syne it had been nick,

Contriv'd, an' carried on the trick,

Had pu'd the Piper frae the moold,

That was in Peebles on him should ;

An' cabbag'd cleading by the road,

An' buskit him sae bra', an' snod ;

An' stown the pistol, bred the strife

Atween the tinkler an' his wife ;

An' brough him to the braithel, where

He left him dead wi' sic a rair,

That fouk wad sworn, they saw him shot

That very instant, on the spot.

Auld

Auld horny thought to gar him howd
 Upo' the gallows, for the gowd,
 He gat lang fyne, an' wadna' set
 His signature, to show the debt.
 But in his drift the Devil fail'd,---
 The second time, the Laird prevail'd,---
 Liv'd lang at hame, in wealth an' ease;
 An' dy'd at last of nae disease,
 But mere auld age---Renown'd his race
 Unto this day posses his place.

KIRRYMUIR, 26th Nov. }
1793. }

F I N I S

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Author intends to publish by subscription, **VULCAN**, a Poem; or **St. PATRICK**, the **SMITH**, and the **DEVIL**, a Tale, about six times the extent of the foregoing: It will appear of course, if this be successful, and it meet with proper encouragement.

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